

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 102186

FOR PERSIKO, S/S ADVANCE TEAM, AMD SPIEGEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG, UK

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MATERIAL FOR SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH
FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN: ZAIRE

1. BACKGROUND:

THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES IN CONJUNCTION WITH MOROCCAN TROOPS ARE MAKING SOME PROGRESS IN REGAINING TERRITORY TAKEN BY THE INVADING FORCES; IN RECENT DAYS, HOWEVER, THE KATANGAN RESISTANCE HAS INCREASED, BOGGING DOWN THE COUNTEROFFENSIVE. THE KATANGANS MAY WELL HAVE DECIDED TO SWITCH TO GUERILLA TACTICS WHILE AWAITING THE DEPARTURE OF THE MOROCCAN TROOPS AND ALLOWING THE HEAVY-HANDED METHODS OF THE RETURNING GOVERNMENT FORCES TO UNDERMINE SUPPORT FOR THE MOBUTU REGIME.

2. IN TALKS HELD RECENTLY WITH NIGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 102186

GARBA, MOBUTU REITERATED HIS INTENTION TO DRIVE THE INVADERS OUT OF ZAIRE BEFORE SITTING DOWN WITH ANGOLAN PRESIDENT NETO. GARBA, WHO WAS REPORTEDLY PLEASED WITH HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH MOBUTU, PLANS TO GO TO LUANDA THE WEEK OF MAY 2-6 AND MAY DISCUSS MOBUTU'S PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING BORDER PATROLS IN THE SHABA REGION, AND MOBUTU'S STATED WILLINGNESS TO SEE SIMILAR PATROLS

ESTABLISHED ALONG OTHER BORDERS WITH ANGOLA.

3. ZAIRE'S POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE HAS IMPROVED SINCE LATE MARCH AND MOBUTU IS SHOWING MORE INITIATIVE ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, FOR INSTANCE, BY VISITING SHABA PROVINCE. ONE UNFORTUNATE SIDE EFFECT OF MOBUTU'S MORE ACTIVE STANCE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN ARRESTS OF POTENTIAL DISSIDENTS.

4. BELGIUM AND FRANCE ARE, WE UNDERSTAND, READYING PLANS FOR A COMPLETE OVERHAUL OF THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES. WE WILL PROVIDE A QUICK REACTION MOBILE CAVALRY SQUADRON, CONSISTING OF ARMORED CARS, ARTILLERY AND INFANTRY, BUT WITHOUT TANKS.

5. CRUCIAL MEETINGS WILL OCCUR IN MAY AND JUNE WHEN WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL DISCUSS RESCHEDULING ZAIRE'S 1977 DEBT PAYMENTS AND FINANCING ZAIRE'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. THE FOUNDATION OF WESTERN ATTEMPTS TO REHABILITATE ZAIRE'S ECONOMY IS THE STANDBY AGREEMENT RECENTLY NEGOTIATED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND WHICH REQUIRES ZAIRE TO TAKE TOUGH ECONOMIC STEPS. ZAIRE'S BEST EFFORTS COULD BE USELESS, HOWEVER, IF THE RAIL ROUTE TO SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH RHODESIA SHOULD BE CLOSED, SINCE THAT IS THE VITAL EXPORT ROUTE FOR COPPER AND COBALT, AND IMPORT ROUTE FOR ESSENTIAL COKE AND CORN.

7. TALKING POINTS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 102186

--FRENCH, MOROCCAN AND OTHER ASSISTANCE HAS CREATED A MILITARY SITUATION IN SHABA IN WHICH THE NIGERIAN MEDIATION, WHICH WE STRONGLY SUPPORT, HAS A CHANCE TO BEAR FRUIT.

-- NIGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER GARBA SEEMS CONFIDENT THAT HE CAN FIND COMMON GROUND FOR ANGOLA AND ZAIRE, POSSIBLY THROUGH BORDER CROSSING VERIFICATION PATROLS.

-- WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE INVADERS MIGHT NOW ESCALATE THEIR GUERRILLA TACTICS WITH SUPPORT FROM ANGOLA WHICH COULD COMPLICATE THE NIGERIAN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS BY HARDENING ZAIRE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MEDIATION.

-- WE FEEL ONLY NEGOTIATION CAN LEAD TO A LONG-TERM SOLUTION OF ZAIRE'S DIFFICULTIES WITH ANGOLA.

-- WE HAVE DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH PLANS TO PROVIDE ZAIRE

WITH A QUICK REACTION MOBILE CAVALRY SQUADRON, CONSISTING OF ARMORED CARS, ARTILLERY AND INFANTRY, BUT WITHOUT THE TEN M-60 TANKS DISCUSSED WITH ZAIRE IN NOVEMBER 1976.

-- WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN ZAIRE AND FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ZAIRE FULLY IMPLEMENT THE RECENTLY-APPROVED IMF STAND-BY AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO PROMOTE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS.

--WE FEEL ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WILL BE NECESSARY FOR ZAIRE TO RESTORE ITS ECONOMIC EQUILIBRIUM AND LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING THESE MATTERS INFORMALLY AS WELL AS DURING THE UPCOMING IBRD CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING AND PARIS CLUB MEETING ON ZAIRE IN MAY AND JUNE.

-- ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES WOULD BE RENDERED UN-MANAGEABLE BY CLOSURE OF THE RAILROAD ROUTES THROUGH
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PAGE 04 STATE 102186

RHODESIA TO SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS. CHRISTOPHER

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